

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2177
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS 6908
USNMR SHAPE
HQ DA WASHDC
HQ DARCOM ALEXANDRIA VA
PM PATRIOT MIL SYS USADARCOM REDSTONE ARSENAL AL

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 1418

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, NPG, MNUC
SUBJECT: SHAPE NIKE HERCULES STUDY

REF: (A) USNATO 1148 (DTG 031628Z MAR 77).
(B) USNATO 1132 (DTG 021721Z MAR 77)
(C) USDEL 132/77 (DTG 031644Z MAR 77)
(D) USNATO 974 (DTG 231755Z FEB 77)
(E) NPG/D-(76)4, ADDENDUM 2

SUMMARY: WE BELIEVE ALLIED REACTIONS TO THE JUST-COMPLETED
SHAPE NIKE HERCULES STUDY WILL GENERATE HIGH-LEVEL INTEREST
IN NIKE HERCULES AT THE OTTAWA NPG MINISTERIAL MEETING, WITH
ATTENTION PROBABLY FOCUSING ON PATRIOT AS A POSSIBLE NATO-
WIDE REPLACEMENT FOR NIKE. THE MAJOR US OBJECTIVE IN THE
NPG WE BELIEVE, SHOULD BE TO CONVINCE ALLIES OF THE NEED TO PLAN FOR
REPLACING AN OBSOLESCE DUAL-CAPABLE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM
WITH A MORE EFFECTIVE CONVENTIONAL ONE. WE ALSO SUGGEST A
POSSIBLE APPROACH WHICH MIGHT LESSEN THE DETRIMENTAL IMPACT
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ON THE ALLIANCE OF ANY US DECISION, BASED ON COST
EFFECTIVENESS OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, REDUCE OR ELIMINATE
US NIKE HERCULES PRIOR TO ITS SCHEDULED REPLACEMENT BY
PATRIOT IN 1984-1985. END SUMMARY.

1. SACEUR HAS FORWARDED UNDER HIS COVER LETTER (REF A)
THE RECENTLY COMPLETED SHAPE NIKE HERCULES STUDY. THIS
IS THE FOURTH IN A SERIES OF SHAPE STUDIES OF NIKE
HERCULES DATING BACK TO JANUARY 1974. THE NUNN AMMEND-
MENT REQUIREMENTS SPURRED THE FIRST TWO, AND MINISTERS

CONSIDERED THE LAST ONE, PART OF A SHAPE ASSESSMENT OF THE US THEATER NUCLEAR FORCE IMPROVEMENT PAPER, AT THE JUNE 1976 NPG MINISTERIAL MEETING. ALL THREE OF THE PREVIOUS STUDIES STRONGLY RECOMMENDED AGAINST ANY REDUCTIONS IN NUCLEAR NIKE HERCULES. THE CURRENT STUDY POINTS OUT THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF NUCLEAR OVER CONVENTIONAL WARHEADS AND DOCUMENTS THE SEVERE LIMITATIONS ON BOTH WHEN CONSIDERED AGAINST THE POSTULATED ATTACK SCENARIO; IT ALSO ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE VULNERABILITY OF THE FIXED NIKE SYSTEM MAKES ITS SURVIVABILITY QUESTIONABLE. THE STUDY ALLUDES TO TWO SUBJECTIVE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE NIKE EVEN LESS EFFECTIVE UNDER ACTUAL CONDITIONS. FIRST IS THE NECESSITY FOR EARLY NUCLEAR RELEASE AUTHORIZATION FOR THAT OPTION TO BE FULLY EFFECTIVE DURING THE RELATIVELY SHORT TIME THE NIKE SITES ARE EXPECTED TO SURVIVE. THE SECOND IS A PROBLEM, INHERENT TO DEFENSIVE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WHICH MAKES THE EXACT TIMING, LOCATION AND EXTENT OF SUCH USE DEPENDENT ON THE ATTACKER'S ACTIONS, FURTHER COMPLICATING AND MAKING LESS LIKELY ANY EARLY NUCLEAR RELEASE DECISION.

2. SACEUR'S COVER LETTER (REF A) WHICH SUMMARIZES THE STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS, WILL, WE BELIEVE, BE THE MAJOR FOCUS OF ATTENTION BY ALLIES AND THE PRIMARY VEHICLE FOR DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY BY PERMREPS
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AND MINISTERS. EARLY IN THE LETTER, HE NOTES THE OBSOLETE NATURE OF THE SYSTEM AND MAKES A CASE FOR RETENTION OF NIKE BASED ON NIKE'S GENERAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE NUCLEAR DETERRENT RATHER THAN ON OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, AS THE PREVIOUS SHAPE STUDIES DID. WHILE NOT RECOMMENDING ANY REDUCTIONS, SACEUR BELIEVES THAT, IF NIKE IS CUT BACK, ALLIES SHOULD NOT REDUCE IT BELOW THAT LEVEL WHICH PROVIDES MINIMUM CONTIGUOUS NUCLEAR COVERAGE ACROSS THE NIKE BELT.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE LAST TWO PARAGRAPHS OF THE COVER LETTER MAY DRAW THE MOST ATTENTION FROM ALLIES. IN THEM, SACEUR NOTES THE NEED FOR AN OVERALL APPROACH TO AIR DEFENSE AND THE WASTE OF RESOURCES THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN FORMULATING THE ON-SITE MEASUREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS REQUIRED FOR PARTIAL NIKE NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS. INSTEAD, HE SUGGESTS THAT FURTHER EFFORTS BE CHanneled INTO ANALYZING AND ACQUIRING A MODERN REPLACEMENT SYSTEM. SOME ALLIES COULD SEIZE ON THE "OVERALL APPROACH" IDEA AS A MEANS TO DELAY NIKE REDUCTIONS THROUGH FURTHER STUDY. BUT WHETHER THEY SUPPORT RETENTION OF NUCLEAR NIKE HERCULES OR NOT, WE BELIEVE THAT ALL ALLIES WILL BE INTERESTED IN MORE INFORMATION REGARDING A REPLACEMENT SYSTEM. WE HAVE SUGGESTED IN REF B THAT IT MAY BE ADVISABLE FOR

SECDEF TO DISCUSS PATRIOT AT THE UPCOMING DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING. AS A RESULT OF THE SHAPE NIKE STUDY, WE NOW BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR MINISTERS AT THE OTTAWA NPG TO REVIEW THE NATURE, STATUS AND PROSPECTS OF PATRIOT.

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4. WE BELIEVE THAT PARALLES CONSIDERATION OF PATRIOT IN OTHER NATO FORA IS ALSO NECESSARY. AS WE NOTED IN REF B, SUCH CONSIDERATION WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL COORDINATION BY WASHINGTON AND EARLY, HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION TO THE MODALITIES OF POSSIBLE ALLIED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM. TECHNICAL AND COST ASPECTS OF PATRIOT ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE CNAD, AND THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WILL NO DOUBT CONSIDER ITS OPERATIONAL POTENTIAL AS THE COMMITTEE BECOMES MORE INVOLVED IN AIR DEFENSE PROBLEMS (REF C). AS WE HAVE ALREADY SUGGESTED, THE DPC WOULD BE THE APPROPRIATE HIGH-LEVEL FORUM TO ESTABLISH THE POLICY FOR NATO'S LONG-TERM AIR DEFENSE POSTURE. WE FORESEE THE NPG, ON THE OTHER HAND, FOCUSING ON THE DETERRENT AND NUCLEAR ASPECTS OF THE NIKE-TO-PATRIOT TRANSITION. IN THIS REGARD, THE SHAPE NIKE HERCULES STUDY HAS PROVIDED AN IN-DEPTH, NATO ANALYSIS OF ALLIANCE NUCLEAR AIR DEFENSE LIMITATIONS. THEREFORE, WE NOW HAVE, THROUGH THE NPG, AN IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPRESS VIVIDLY UPON ALLIES AT A HIGH LEVEL THE COMPARATIVE INCREASE IN OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY PROVIDED BY
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PATRIOT.

5. WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY STATED OUR BELIEF THAT PARTICULAR

CARE MUST BE ACCORDED TO THE HANDLING OF US INITIATIVES AFFECTING THE NUCLEAR DEFENSE POSTURE OF THE ALLIANCE (REF D). THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT WILL BE TO CONVINCE ALLIES, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THE FRG, THAT THE OVERALL NATO DETERRENT WILL BE MAINTAINED OR ENHANCED THROUGH THE INCREASED OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY OF PATRIOT OVER NIKE HERCULES IN EITHER THE NUCLEAR OR CONVENTIONAL MODE OF THE LATTER. THE FRG IS THE MOST SENSITIVE TO THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF A NUCLEAR PRESENCE, ALMOST REGARDLESS OF MILITARY OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY. HOWEVER, IN WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE US THEATER NUCLEAR FORCE IMPROVEMENT PAPER (REF E), THE FRG DID SUPPORT THE EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT OF NIKE HERCULES BY A MORE CAPABLE CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM.

6. THE SHAPE STUDY DID NOT EXPLORE THE COST EFFECTIVENESS IMPLICATIONS OF NIKE HERCULES. COST AND MANPOWER DATA APPEAR IN AN ANNEX, BUT ONLY THE US, FRG AND NETHERLANDS SUBMITTED DATA AS A BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS. REGARDLESS OF THE PROBABLY LOW COST EFFECTIVENESS OF SUCH A NOW-ADMITTEDLY OBSOLESCE SYSTEM, THERE ARE ADVANTAGES, GENERALLY THOSE OF ALLIANCE COHESION, IN KEEPING NIKE HERCULES OPERATIONAL, UNTIL A REPLACEMENT SYSTEM IS AVAILABLE. FIRST IS THE DETERRENT EFFECT PER SE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO WHICH SACEUR ALLUDES (REF A) AND TO WHICH PARA 5 ABOVE REFERS. AN IMPORTANT PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION RELATES TO NATIONAL AND NATO FORCE PLANNING PROCESSES. IT WILL BE FAR EASIER FOR ALLIES TO REPLACE A NIKE WITH PATRIOT THAN NOTHING WITH PATRIOT. REPLACING AN OBSOLETE SYSTEM WITH A MORE MODERN ONE IS STANDARD PROCEDURE IN NATO, BUT, AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE CASE OF AWACS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO INJECT A
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FUNCTIONALLY NEW WEAPON SYSTEM INTO THE FORCE PLANNING MACHINERY.

7. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN THE US THEATER NUCLEAR FORCE IMPROVEMENT PAPER, WASHINGTON IS ON RECORD AS FAVORING "SUBSTANTIALLY THINNING OUT" NUCLEAR NIKE HERCULES CAPABILITIES BASED ON THE LOWER DEGREE OF DECISIVENESS AND SHOCK WHICH DEFENSIVE NUCLEAR SYSTEMS PROVIDE IN COMPARISON TO OFFENSIVE ONES, AS WELL AS THE COST EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA, INCLUDING AN ESTIMATED \$75 MILLION FOR WEAPON STORAGE SITE SECURITY UPGRADING. THIS, COMBINED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY COSTS OF MAINTAINING AN OBSOLESCE SYSTEM FOR APPROXIMATED EIGHT YEARS, COULD LOGICALLY MAKE NIKE HERCULES A CANDIDATE FOR EARLY REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION. WITHOUT SOME COMPENSATORY ACTION BY THE US TO OFFSET THE OPERATIONAL EFFECT OF SUCH A DRAWDOWN, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT

SOME OR ALL OF THE ALLIES WOULD RAPIDLY FOLLOW SUIT, WITH
CONSEQUENT PROBLEMS FOR PATRIOT LATER ON.

8. CAREFULLY STRUCTURED CONSULTATIONS CAN CONTRIBUTE
TO ALLIED ACCEPTANCE OF ESSENTIALLY ANY REASONABLE IN-
ITIATIVES IN THIS AREA. BUT IT IS THE PROCESS OF CON-
SULTATION THAT WILL BE CRITICAL. CONCURRENTLY, WE SEE
VALUE IN IMPLEMENTING SOME MEASURES DESIGNED TO FILL,
AT LEAST PARTIALLY, ANY OPERATIONAL GAP BETWEEN THE RE-
DUCTION OF NIKE HERCULES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF PATRIOT,
E.G., ACCELERATED OR EXPANDED DEPLOYMENT OF AIR DEFENSE
AIRCRAFT. IN OUR VIEW, TWO KEY ATTRIBUTES SHOULD CHAR-
ACTERIZE SUCH STEPS. FIRST, THESE MEASURES SHOULD BE
VISIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED AIR DEFENSE; ALLIES
ARE UNLIKELY TO PERCEIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN OTHER AREAS,
REGARDLESS OF THEIR VALUE OF NECESSITY, AS ADEQUATE
TRADEOFFS FOR NIKE. SECOND, THESE MEASURES SHOULD BE
PRESENTED AS INTERIM FIXES, WHICH ADMITTEDLY DO NOT
QUITE FILL THE AIR DEFENSE GAP; OTHERWISE, THE RATIONALE
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COULD BE UNDERCUT FOR A SIGNIFICANT PATRIOT EXPENDITURE
AT A LATER DATE. IF THE ALLIES SHOULD ADOPT A COURSE
OF EARLY DRAWDOWN OF NIKE, THE US EXAMPLE OF OUR
INTERIM CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR THE
MAINTENANCE OF AN ALLIANCE COMMITMENT TO STRONG AIR
DEFENSE AND POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OF PATRIOT.
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